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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### VOICE RECORDER AND SURVIVAL KIT ESSENTIAL APPARATUS FOR WATERFOWL SURVEYS

A voice recorder and survival kit are two essential items in the Fish and Wildlife Service planes which scout the expanses of Canada and Alaska in annual waterfowl breeding ground surveys. The voice recorders are used hour after hour; the survival kits have remained untouched in the niche in the plane.

The use of the especially designed voice recorder, John L. Farley, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, points out, makes it possible for the crew of the plane to list everything they see without taking their eyes off the targets.

A breeding ground survey is carefully planned. Some 400 wildlife experts from Canada and the United States participate and they cover all of the important waterfowl nesting areas in Canada and Alaska and about 30 of the States. There are both ground and aerial crews. Each has a definite task.

The aerial surveys are made along previously established parallel lines. In areas where the breeding birds are concentrated, these aerial transects cover large portions of some States and provinces at intervals of from 7 to 12 miles. In other places they range up to 60 miles apart.

There are two men in a plane--the pilot and the observer. Keeping the plane "on course" is essential because any error made in the sample survey is reflected and magnified in the completed job.

The plane is flown 200 feet from the ground and at a speed as slow as is consistent with safety. Both the pilot and the observer count birds, each covering a strip 220 yards wide on his own side of the plane. A voice recorder is used so that the information can be recorded rapidly, and so that the observer's attention is not distracted. This is particularly important to the pilot who must give constant attention to the terrain ahead of the plane when flying at such low altitude.

Although Service planes have covered the remote areas in northern Canada each summer since 1947, and have flown nearly a half million miles while doing so, there have been no forced landings which have resulted in search and rescue. Engine trouble has delayed flights on occasion, and adverse weather has forced the planes to land on remote lakes and await better conditions, but in every instance the planes and crews have reached destination "under their own steam."

However, the planes are equipped for emergencies. The survival kit is actually only part of the material carried along "just in case." The planes flying northern Canada and Alaska carry tents, bedding, guns, fishing tackle and plenty of emergency rations. One of the fliers says he is equipped to get along in the wilderness for weeks if necessary.

The survival kit is there in case of a special emergency. It weighs about 40 pounds and its aluminum case is so constructed that the kit will float. Often an extra float and line are attached.

The kit contains emergency rations for one man for 12 days or two men for six days. It also has such things as a gun, ammunition, matches, burning glass, flares, salt and salt tablets, tarpaulins, headnets, insect repellents, candles, soap, whistle, file, compass, canteen, jackknife, saw-knife-shovel assembly and fishing tackle.

The survey is not an effort to determine the actual numbers of birds. It is rather an effort to get comparative data year to year. And since the identical courses are flown year after year, usually by the same men, it is possible to get this comparative data. Subsequent flight and hunting records indicate that the surveys do the work they are designed to do.

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